



Chamber of Commerce

Your Business Advocate Since 1931

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 2/12/09
HB 227

To Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

The Montana Chamber of Commerce would like to go on record in support of HB 227. As the state's primary business advocate, the Montana Chamber is always supportive of good legal reform bills that will reduce the number of frivolous lawsuits, limit excessive damage awards, and generally provide a more stable legal environment where businesses and the private sector can expect fair and predictable results.

HB 227 aims to enact some common sense reform in medical malpractice damage awards. In order to reduce inflated damage awards, considerations should be made regarding the deceased or injured party's economic consumption, which is what the person would have spent on basic necessities and personal expenditures. Damage awards in malpractice claims that do not take into account those factors lead to higher malpractice insurance costs for all medical professionals.

One essential part (but not the only part) of addressing increasing health care costs is to deal with undue liabilities and exposure we place on our health care professionals. Higher medical malpractice insurance costs have forced some practitioners out of business or required them to move to other areas. Montana's rural communities have a tough time already retaining and recruiting medical professionals.

Due to the number of bills being heard in committee as Transmittal approaches, I regret that I am able to deliver these thoughts in person. Thank you for considering our thoughts on these important matters.

Respectfully Yours,

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